

AMIAA News

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The Rev. Jirair Sogomian
Editor



AMAA Sheen "Shoghig" Camp in Armenia (Story on page 4)

"Translating The Resurrection Into The Vernacular"

Rev. Jirair M. Sogomian

The lengthening days of Lent and our eager anticipation of Easter, remind us, once again, of the vital connection between our mission and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mission is based on the resurrection of Jesus, for it was the risen Christ who gave, what we have called, the Great Commission, the marching orders to his followers to "Go ... teach, preach, baptize and make disciples." Without the resurrection faith, our mission work becomes pure benevolence, aware of the other's physical needs but totally oblivious of human spiritual needs, without the satisfaction of which there is no hope for our broken world. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in the fifteenth chapter of his First Letter to the Corinthians, "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied."

Christian Mission participates in the power and reality of Christ's resurrection, which has once and for all defeated death. With every breath that expresses and proclaims the Good News of the gospel – of God's salvation of humankind through the life, work, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus; with every deed of love that holds death in abeyance; with every morsel of bread shared, shelter provided, healing administered to sustain physical life until it confesses the Lordship of Christ; mission reveals its partnership in the spread of the resurrection faith and sustains the hope of its ultimate victory!

Popular Christian theologian, C. S. Lewis, once said that if you can't translate stuff into the vernacular, you either don't understand it or you don't believe it. Though Lewis might have referred to making the gospel understandable by common folk, I believe that what he said also applies to translating the theoretical word into common, everyday action that affects and shapes life. This is what John the evangelist says that God did. **"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."**

Mission is in partnership with God in making God's love concrete in the world. It translates the gospel of Christ to flesh and blood, so that the common folk do not only hear **"God so loved the world ..."** but also see, taste, and experience that love in the rough and tumble of their daily lives ... full of hatred, greed, prejudice, rejection and injustice.

As you read these lines, if you are wondering who I am talking about, allow me to gently help by reminding you that I am talking about you! As a believer, you also have received your marching orders from the risen Christ, and you have been challenged to participate in perpetuating his unique ministry, so beautifully expressed in the words of St. Francis of Assisi:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy."

"O Divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love: for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

As individual Christians, you and I are called to be positive proof that the risen Christ is alive in us and through us in our world. We are called to show by our words and deeds of love, by our struggle for justice and peace, and by our taking the risk in opposing any worldly power that claims the lordship of Christ, to bear witness that because Christ is risen, we are citizens of a new world, of God's new world, already here yet fully anticipated in the fullness of time! It is only with such a faith that we can greet one another with the words, **"Christ is risen from the dead! Blessed is the resurrection of our Lord!" G**

Armenian Children Enjoying Christmas Hope And Cheer

by Harout Nercessian

The Armenian Missionary Association in Armenia (AMAA) continues its tradition of bringing Christmas joy to tens of thousands of children and their parents throughout Armenia and Karabagh.

During the months of December and January, over 20,000 children and their parents attended the 64 Christmas programs held at 54 locations throughout Armenia and Karabagh. 16,000 Christmas presents were distributed to needy children during these programs. Each child received a gift bag containing candies, fairy tale literature and "Shoghig", AMAA's children's quarterly.

The Christmas programs feature dramas, puppet shows, songs, dance, clowns, Santa Claus and much more. The value of these programs however extends beyond the candies and the one hour fun that the children enjoy. Most of the children are materially deprived and are delighted at the thought of sinking their teeth in the chocolate bars, yet they learn that Christmas has much more than taste bud pleasure to offer.

AMAA Christmas programs educate the children and their parents on the meaning and message of Christmas. In many locations, this is done through dramas, puppet shows, and songs. They hear of Jesus Christ, God's great gift to mankind. They learn about sharing, trusting God and being happy by loving one another.

Furthermore, these programs expose the children to the performing arts, culturally enriching them. Due to financial considerations, most would not even consider attending such cultural events.

The "Shoghig" quarterly is a 20-page color publication featuring Christmas articles, stories, games and puzzles for children, teaching them about the meaning and message of Christmas. Furthermore, it educates them on Armenian national values and our cultural heritage. Shoghik is the only children's publication of its kind in Armenia.

In the city of Kapan, Southern Armenia, many approached AMAA staff asking for the Shoghik quarterly. They said, "we are not asking for the candies, we want Shoghiks". These people wanted to hear

about God's love.

In Yerevan, 3,500 children and parents watched the drama entitled "chaos at night". Many in the audience were shedding tears as they watched a self-centered leader change into a caring person after being touched by God on Christmas eve. The drama was shown five times to packed audiences at the prestigious Hagop Baronian theater.

The blessings of these programs extend beyond the audience. The performers are children who participate in AMAA's various children's programs such as drama groups, choirs, and Bible classes. The actors and the performers themselves are greatly blessed as they use their God given talents to share God's love with others. Many are touched by the dramas that they act.

In many towns and villages, the AMAA program is the only Christmas activity in town. Shiragamood (formerly Nalbant) is a small village 10Km West of Spitak. It was the very epicenter of the 1988 earthquake. The entire village was destroyed. Here, over 300 children and adults (over 10% of the population) attended AMAA's Christmas program. Most came to receive their only Christmas gift. Yet, they went home with more than candy bars and fairy tale books.

The Noubarashen School of Special Education houses boys that need special supervision. They are either orphans or have parents that cannot raise them. Many are sent to this school because of petty crimes they have committed. AMAA has an ongoing Christian Education program for these boys. The Christmas program at this school was organized by the boys themselves, with assistance from their teachers and AMAA volunteers. They performed Christmas songs, recited poetry, and acted out humorous dramas and sketches. The teachers and AMAA volunteers in the audience laughed and cried, as they saw the fruit of their labor. Instead of thinking mischief, these boys were performing on



stage, using their talents for God's glory. Each of the 80 students of the school received a pair of brand new shoes, purchased by the AMAA with donations from the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno.

Hundreds of winter hats and scarfs, knitted by caring ladies in New Jersey, were gifted to needy children of Armenia. These beautiful gifts brought warmth to the bodies and spirits of these children during this very cold winter.

At the request of Mr. Anoushavan Danielian, Prime Minister of the Republic of Karabagh, AMAA and the Artsakh Diocese of the Apostolic Church distributed 10,000 gifts to all Karabagh pupils of Grade 1 to 4. The project was jointly funded by the AMAA, Artsakh Diocese and the World Council of Churches Armenia Round Table.G

AMAA Sheen "Shoghig" Camp In Armenia

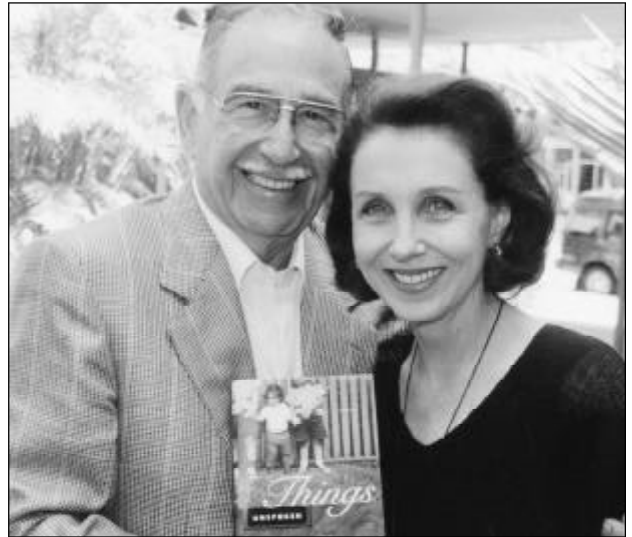
To many of us adults and young adults, the experience of attending a Christian summer camp has left an indelible impression on our spiritual life and the way we value today a similar experience for our children and grandchildren! Youthful experiences that have shaped our Christian character, whether in Sunday School, Daily Vacation Bible School or at a Church Camp, often evoke nostalgic feelings and positive reminiscences of events that have shaped and encouraged the commitment of our life to Christ.

I believe it is this common and prevalent assessment of a Christian camp experience among Armenian Evangelicals that has shaped AMAA's traditional emphasis on youth camps as one of the lynchpins of our mission endeavors, whether it is in the Diaspora or in Armenia and Karabagh today! For the last decade, literally thousands of children and youth have been granted the privilege to attend a Christian Camp in Armenia or Karabagh, and to experience the healthy and invigorating physical, social and spiritual atmosphere that is bound to shape one's faith or initiate one's faith journey. AMAA leaders, past and present, whose spiritual lives have been shaped and nurtured in similar experiences, have greatly valued this means of evangelism and have, at times at great personal sacrifice and commitment, promoted, facilitated and supported similar experiences for today's youth. The experience has proven even more beneficial and

vital to youth who have been deprived of a healthy Christian atmosphere at home or at school.

Each summer, our mission representatives in Armenia have organized and offered summer camp programs in the north and central Armenia, as well as in Karabagh. In most instances, especially in Armenia, camp facilities have been rented for five weeks during summer to provide an adequate environment for a Christian Camp. In the past year or so, however, an opportunity was presented to us to purchase a campsite of our own in Hankavan, a bit north of central Armenia, where in time we can develop a model campsite to benefit thousands of disadvantaged children and youth with the wholesome experience of a Christian Camp.

Following an extensive search for a benefactor who would finance the purchase of such a camp, the Spirit guided us to **Dr. and Mrs. Jack Sheen**, whose ready and wholehearted endorsement to use the Sheen Family endowment funds for this noble purpose has made our dream come true. Thanks to the availability of those funds, first established by **John and Victoria Sheen**, the late parents of Dr. Jack Sheen, the Hankavan Camp has been recently purchased by the AMAA and named "Armenian Missionary



Dr. & Mrs. Jack and Anitra Sheen.

Association Sheen 'Shoghig' Camp." The word "Shoghig", meaning a little light beam in Armenian, indicates that this camp is for children and youth. Restoration and refurbishing of this twelve acre camp will begin this Spring to make the camp partially ready for use this summer, and will continue for the next two years to bring the whole campus and buildings to a level that will reflect the high standards of the AMAA.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Jack and Anitra Sheen for their generous gesture, and for their wise investment for the healthy spiritual future of our children and youth in Armenia. May the Lord richly bless them and the memory of their parents, and inspire others to emulate their wise and loving spirit to turn the hearts and minds of our youth in Armenia to the Christ of their historic faith!**G**



My Pilgrimage To Armenia

By Bryan Bedrossian

My wife Rosie and I had the opportunity to travel to Armenia in late December 2002 to visit some of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) churches and fellowships. It was a wonderful experience to see first hand the great work the AMAA is doing in Armenia to spread the Gospel.

We landed at Zvartnots airport on December 28th at 1:00 am. The outside temperature when we landed was approximately minus 15 degrees.

After a few hours of sleep, Harout Nercessian, AMAA Deputy Representative in Armenia picked us up at the Ani Plaza Hotel for our first appointment at the Nubarashen Boarding School #1 for Special Education in Yerevan. At this School the AMAA has started a Christian Education ministry. Also my home church, First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno California (FAPC), raised \$700 through its vacation bible school for the purchase of new athletic shoes for the orphans of Nubarashen.

After spending a few days in Yerevan, Harout and myself made our way to Talin to see the children's Christmas program by the children of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Talin. Regardless of the sub-zero temperature, as enthusiastic as were the performers, the over 300 children and parents in the auditorium were just as enthusiastic and very attentive. At the end of the program gifts from the "AMAA Christmas in Armenia" were distributed to the children.

The AMAA was invited to work in Talin by the former Mayor of the city and has established a church and various Christian Education and humanitarian programs. The Pastor of the church is Armen Mickaelian.

The Evangelical Church of Armenia in Talin has about 120 people attending Sunday worship service and about 100 young people attending its Christian Education program. They have also started a soccer ministry.

On January 1st Harout, Rosie and I visited 3 evangelical families. In Armenia it is a tradition that from Jan 1st to Jan 3rd every home sets out a table and people visit each other. Rosie, Harout and I were visiting un-

til late that night on Jan. 1st. It was fun and very interesting. In Armenia, during winter only one room is heated in most homes, so all activities from eating to sleeping take place in that one room. But even in these conditions the people we visited were very cheerful especially since they were having guests from America.

A highlight of the trip was traveling to Talin again on January 5th Christmas Eve to participate in the worship service at Talin church. The service and sermon by Badveli Armen Michaelian was very spiritual and the singing by the choir and the worshippers was really inspirational.

After the service I went to Badveli Michaelian's relative's home to break bread and have fellowship. We also discussed the possibility of FAPC establishing a sister church relationship with Talin. I am happy to report that our church FAPC has agreed to enter into a sister church relationship with the AMAA church in Talin.

On January 7th Harout and myself left on a 3 day trip to visit the AMAA churches in Goris and Stepanagerd (Karabagh). Going to Stepanagerd has been a dream of mine for years.

Goris is in southern Armenia and is a 4 hour drive from Yerevan. The drive is very scenic and on our trip we were blessed with great views of Ararat. Goris is one of the main cities of the Sunik Region, a very picturesque city with houses built on the side of hills. It is famous for having one of the largest above sea level coral reefs. The people are poor like the rest of Armenia.

Goris also has a very active AMAA min-



Children of Nubarashen, with shoes donated by funds raised from the First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno Vacation Bible School (above). Pastor Armen Michaelian (sitting) and Family with Bryan Bedrossian (standing).

istry and center where Harout and I spent 2 nights. Unfortunately the water pipes had burst due to the cold so we didn't have any running water but that didn't stop us from enjoying ourselves. We arrived there for the AMAA Christmas program. The highlight though came when Santa Claus came to pass the gifts out to the children. It made me feel good to know that our church FAPC had played a role in providing these gifts for the children.

After spending the night in Goris we set out for Karabagh, the place where so much recent Armenian history has happened.

Karabagh is stark and stunning in its beauty. Fortunately for us the weather was clear and we saw Karabagh in all its majestic beauty. It is a mountainous country. A country of many colors and shades. A country, that must be seen to fully appreciate its

(Cont'd on the following page)

A Special Christmas Party In Armenia

Belle Ashodian of California is a Christian lady with a heart full of love. A heart that cares, hurts for the hurting and reaches out.

Several years ago, Mrs. Ashodian was deeply moved by the suffering of the many needy families in Armenia. She had to do something.

She called the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and, with tears in her eyes, offered to sponsor 20 families, providing for their needs regularly on monthly basis. She gradually increased the number of families to 250. This is in addition to the many children she sponsors through AMAA's Child Sponsorship Program.

Mrs. Ashodian is not a passive donor. She takes interest in the families she supports, frequently calling them or our office to inquire about their well being.

Realizing that these needy families cannot afford the holiday table that many take

for granted, Mrs. Ashodian once again this year sponsored two Christmas parties, one in Yerevan and another one in Gumri, on January 10, and 12 respectively.

135 individuals participated in these parties. They were served traditional Armenian holiday meals, fruits, and dessert. Most important though, they had a great time of fellowship, worship and thanksgiving. They sang, prayed, testified to God's loving care, and thanked God for His many blessings. They were all very grateful to Mrs. Ashodian whose caring heart, expressed through her generous support, enables them to carry on in these very hard times.

The AMAA is grateful to God and is fortunate to have a friend and a faithful supporter in Mrs. Ashodian.

Her caring and loving heart brings joy to the hearts of hundreds of people in our homeland, Armenia. **G**



Belle Ashodian



(PILGRIMAGE TO ARMENIA...Cont'd from page 5)

unique beauty.

I had many feelings driving through Karabagh. I remembered how closely I followed the war in the news. How sad I was when in 1993 I learned that Monte "Avo" Melkonian "Marduni Commander" was killed. Monte Melkonian grew up in the San Joaquin Valley and was my age to the year. I remember how happy I was when I heard of the capture of Shoushi and Kelbajar. Now I was going to Stepanagert to observe and hopefully help in the future in the spreading of the word of Christ.

When we arrived in Stepanagert we went straight to the AMAA center and met with Arsen, AMAA Representative in Karabagh, who had lived through the almost 4 year bombing siege of Stepanagert and described how they had lived underground for almost the whole time and how at night when the bombing would let up they would go out and look for food.

The effects of this bombing are still seen today. Even though the streets have been completely repaired many buildings still

carry the scars of those bombings. I also had a chance to go to Shoushi the ancient Armenian city with the famous and beautiful white marble Armenian Church. Shush prior to the war was inhabited by 50,000 people who were mostly Azeris but during the war all the Azeris left leaving Shush mostly depopulated. Today there are less than 4,000 people living in Shush and the city is in much worse condition than Stepanagert.

Later that day we participated in the AMAA Christmas program and it was great and really clever. One thing is for sure the hys sure know how to put on a Christmas show. After the show the children were given gifts from the AMAA Christmas for Armenia. The children who received the gifts were the poorest of the children in Stepanagert.

We returned to Yerevan January 9th tired but I was very much inspired by the work the AMAA is doing in Armenia. The AMAA is doing a wonderful job in Armenia. Any resources they receive are being put to very

good use in spreading the word of God. I was very impressed by the dedication of the whole staff.

But as great a job as the AMAA is doing; the work of spreading the Good News is too great for any one Christian group or Christian Church to handle. That is why it is encouraging to see better and better relationships between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the AMAA. We, as Armenian Christians, whether Apostolic or Evangelical, all have the same goals of spreading the Good News and promoting and teaching our Armenian Christian history and culture in Armenia.

It is interesting that many Armenian Evangelical Churches in America have forgotten about teaching our Armenian Christian history and culture but this has not been forgotten by the Armenian Evangelicals in Armenia. It is through the teaching of this history and culture that we as Armenians know what we have suffered in the name of Christ and how Christ has blessed our people as well. **G**

A Historic Ordination In Turkey

by Nishan L. Bakalian

The ordination of **Rev. Krikor Agabaloglu** in Istanbul, Turkey, on Sunday, Dec. 1, 2002, represented a major event in the life of the Armenian Evangelical church worldwide, and a milestone in the spiritual pilgrimage of the ordinand, a dear brother and dedicated coworker in Christ.

A native of the central Turkish town of Arabkir, Krikor moved with his family to Malatya and graduated from high school there. He did his university education in Istanbul as a history major, but after graduating, marrying and having two children, his life changed in a totally unexpected way. A coal-stove malfunction in their home poisoned the entire family, taking the lives of their children. Krikor and his wife, Maria, eventually recovered, but Krikor remained incapacitated in hospital. Consumed by thoughts of his misfortune, he grew bitter and concluded that there is no God.

In the depths of his despair, searching for meaning in life, Krikor found a Turkish New Testament—a book unfamiliar to him—and began reading it. Although he did not believe in God, it intrigued him, especially the person of Jesus Christ. As he read he became even more interested, and although he was still angry at God and full of accusatory questions, nonetheless God softened his heart and spoke to him. In the Bible he did not discover answers to the question “why,” but he realized how great is the grace and forgiveness of the Lord.

Krikor’s faith has since weathered many storms, whether within the church or in society at large. His lengthy convalescence, when he was the subject of an experimental treatment to avoid amputation of his arm, helped him to see that nothing is impossible for God. The joy that he and Maria experienced in having two more children taught them about God’s goodness. Krikor, recalling his childhood questions to his father about why he prayed, remembered his father’s answer, “My son, someday you’ll understand,” and learned about his heavenly Father’s faithfulness.

Over the years, Krikor shared his faith in his workplace, as a diamond-setter, and in

the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasha, which was founded in 1850, became a member of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) in the 1940s, but which had not seen a pastoral ordination since the mid-1930s. As a lay leader he helped the church remain faithful to its calling of sharing the Gospel with all. Under his leadership, today it is a thriving church with four different congregations and even more ethnic groups worshipping there—Armenian, Turk, Assyrian, Persian, Moldavian, and many expatriate residents of Istanbul. The church reaches out to refugees and offers temporary shelter to many. It has Bibles and Christian literature available in a number of languages. Above all, it remains a place where people of every race, creed and tongue can hear the saving message of Jesus Christ, come to faith and grow as children of God.

Rev. Agabaloglu has become well known within his country through his sermons on one of Istanbul’s two full-time Christian radio stations. His reputation has also grown in the past decade because of his speaking out for minority rights, whether that of his own people or of other groups within Turkey. He has done this in major Turkish newspapers, on broadcast television, and before religious and civic leaders.

The relationship Krikor and Maria have cultivated with believers throughout the world has been a mutual blessing. Locally, the Gedik Pasha church has become part of the network of Christian churches in the country and has served the Lord Jesus through its social and spiritual outreach. At the same time, Krikor has benefited from studies at the Protestant “Bythinia” Bible Institute, set up by the American Board in Istanbul, in which men and women from a variety of churches completed a short course of study over a few years. Those fraternal relations have extended beyond the local scene to include active participation in the



UAECNE and the work of the AMAA.

The day of ordination was truly a day of blessing. Songs of praise and worship in Armenian and Turkish resounded in the historic sanctuary, beautiful not only because of the recent renovations, but especially because of the unity expressed. Race, age and culture took a back seat to the Lord Jesus, who unites us. The barriers of time and distance were also broken down, as Hrant Guzelyan, the eldest member of the Church, now living in France, rejoiced with the new members at God’s faithfulness in bringing life and hope to what was, twenty years ago, a “hopeless cause.” And so as to remind us of his mysterious ways, God led a young Armenian man past the church doors during the ordination service—a man who had been a youth under the care of Hrant in the Youth Home (Badanegan Doon) ministry of the Gedik Pasha church. Upon hearing Armenian hymns being sung, he stepped in and was shocked to see his mentor there, so many years later. The seed of God’s Word is scattered, and does not return to him empty, but does what he intends it to do! (Isaiah 55.10-11)

And so, the gathering of six Armenian Evangelical and two western Protestant clergy on that day, along with over 400 worshippers from East and West for the ordination service and laying on of hands was merely a joyful affirmation of what God has already been doing in and through Krikor Agabaloglu. The president of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the Rev. Megerdich Karagoezian, conducted the service, which was nothing short of an offering of heartfelt thanks to God for his power, his goodness, and his faithfulness. **G**

Re-evaluation Seminar For Teachers Of Armenian Evangelical Schools of Syria

by Haroutiun Selimian

Under the sponsorship of the Executive Committee of the Armenian Evangelical Community of Syria, and organized by the Armenian Evangelical Educational Council, with the cooperation of the Educational Council of Lebanon, a Teacher Training and Re-evaluation Seminar was held September 8-12, 2002, at Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon. The reason behind offering this seminar was educational, spiritual and intellectual preparation, and increasing participants' development by introducing them to new pedagogical and educational methods.

Participating in this seminar were a total of 64 teachers and principals, coming from schools belonging to the community (from Aleppo, Kessab and Damascus).

The seminar began with an opening worship service on Monday, September 9, 2002, at 9 a.m., in the audio-visual center of Haigazian University. The president of Haigazian University, the Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, officially opened the seminar. In his opening remarks, President Haidostian greeted those present, expressing great appreciation for the ensuing program. He gladly noted and made the observation about the foundational and central mission of Haigazian University, which is to prepare Armenian Evangelical teachers and leaders.

Thereafter the chairman of the Armenian Evangelical Educational Council of Syria, the Rev. Haroutiun Selimian, offered his words. He concisely presented the vision and motivation behind the seminar: continuing education and renewed energy, and urged the participants to remain faithful to their educational mission and responsibility.

The seminar was made possible through the foundational and practical efforts of the Educational Worker of the Armenian Evangelical Educational Council of Lebanon, Mrs. Sevan Balabanian. Mrs. Balabanian presented the details of the program, and called the participants to consider this program an excellent opportunity to benefit as much as possible from what Haigazian University has to offer.

Throughout the four days of the seminar



classes began at 9 a.m., with the entire group being divided into four sections, each of which studied a specifically-chosen subject from the following list: "The Basic Principles of Education," presented by Dr. Hanine Hout (Haigazian University); "The Psychology of a Child's Development," presented by Mrs. Sarar Maalouf (Haigazian University); "The Stages of a Child's Mental Growth, Classroom Behavior, the Student's Drives," presented by Mrs. Shaghig Khodaverdian; "The Use of Marionettes and Puppets as Teaching Tools," presented by Mrs. Liza Hekimian; "The Important Influence of Arts and Crafts," presented by Mrs. Tamar Bakkalian; "Music Education and Rhythm Classes," presented by Mrs. Georgia Andonov; "The Computer as a Teaching Tool," presented by Miss Rima Al Hajj. "Modern Means of Managing a Class and Solutions to Classroom Problems" was presented by Miss Maha Abou Ladan, and "The Student's Development and Evaluation" was presented by Mr. Sultan Nasr el-Din.

Along with the aforementioned class top-

ics, special classes were held for principals and board members, with an aim towards imparting information and developing skills in administrative and organizational matters.

For fellowship and food, the participants were hosted on the university campus, where they had an opportunity to get to know each other better and be an encouragement to each other in their sacrificial service.

Seminar participants also enjoyed tours and visits to important places and scenic destinations in Lebanon.

A period for written evaluation was held at the close of the seminar, after which the participants, in acknowledgement of their participation in 18 working sessions at the University, each received an official certification from the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, given by Mrs. Sevan Balabanian and the Rev. Haroutiun Selimian. We thank God for this unprecedented and unique event, and express our hope that the Armenian Evangelical Schools remain the faithful guardians of their mission of educating the hearts and minds of their people's children. **G**

Armenian Evangelical Schools In Lebanon

The Armenian Evangelical Schools of Lebanon reopened on September 30 for the academic year of 2002-2003. The seven schools reported an overall increase of 50 students this year. A large number of the 1500 students of our schools have flooded into the various CE programs that the churches offer for them. Some students of the higher grades teach in Sunday Schools. Three out of 4 highest scorers among Armenian students in the 9th Grade Governmental Exam are from our schools.

The following are some of the major highlights of recent activities of the Armenian Evangelical Schools in Lebanon:

- Partial joining of Baccalaureate classes in 3 schools has reduced the financial load and increased the number of high school students.
- The AMAA facelift, for the 3rd year successively, helped the improvement of facilities and has made a wonderful impact on student and teacher performance.
- The Ainjar school opened 2 newly built classrooms dedicated to all past and present teachers.

Christmas Programs

All schools in Lebanon held programs and assemblies before their Christmas vacation, and the Lord has encouraged us to rejoice through these children and youth. In the midst of financial struggles (more than 85% percent of the students need financial aids) and social problems, the talents and Christian commitment of these young people remind us to be joyful in all circumstances.

Some special gifts were: A) toys and gadgets donated by various organizations. B) A meal at a fast food restaurant for a group of very poor children of Trad School, who can otherwise never eat in such a place. C) A big Christmas celebration held by the Municipality of Bourj Hammoud in the Bourj Hammoud stadium for all the area schools.

Church youth realized special programs to proclaim the glory of our Savior's birth. Of particular note is the newly-formed junior youth group at the Christian Social Center, Trad, which organized a dinner and program for their parents, encouraging the fathers especially to see where and how they spend their Saturdays.

KCHAG Summer Camp

At the end of November 2002 KCHAG witnessed a unique Costume Party program with general knowledge contest and disguises, organized by the KCHAG Programs Committee.

On January 4, 2003, the 'Nor-Yerk' band led a special caroling night on the occasion of Armenian Christmas Eve. Puddles of water (inside the hall) did not get in the way of the Christmas spirit as more than 100 people defied the bad weather (outside the hall) and went up to KCHAG to sing carols and listen to Scripture reading. The event was organized by the CE Executive Committee. After the caroling, the participants were sent home with a traditional Armenian sweet- anoushabour. It is noteworthy that more & more people are coming back to KCHAG for the first time to rediscover it.



Joint 12th grade of Shamlian-Tatigian and Central High Schools (above). Central High School students in their renovated playground.

Rededicating God's House

Sunday, December 15, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ainjar welcomed an overflow crowd to the opening and rededication of their refurbished sanctuary. The church roof is now tiled, a bell tower at the entrance has been added, the interior walls have been strengthened, the pillars removed from the middle of the sanctuary and new windows were installed along with a new heating system. Other improvements were made as well, through the generosity of donors in Lebanon and abroad.

Haigazian Students Reach Out

Christian and non-Christian students alike decided to bring cheer to underprivileged children in Lebanon, and - in a big way - planned a carnival for them for Nov. 30, on the grounds of the First Armenian Evangelical Church. The university's humanitarian club, called "Desert Streams," planned the whole event, found sponsors, prepared gifts and food, helped construct the booths, and entertained 600 children from Christian and Muslim organizations, including a few Armenian institutions. This event attracted the attention of the news media in Lebanon, who praised the students for their gesture of good will. We thank God that many of these students are active Christians on campus and in Armenian Evangelical churches.

Rose and Yervant Hovhanness Levonian Educational Fund

by Joyce Abdulian*

Fresno State University has been one of the five beneficiaries of the **Rose and Yervant Hovhanness Levonian Educational Fund** which provides scholarships for deserving Armenian students since 1985. Yervant Hovhanness Levonian was my uncle.

Each time I receive the *Hye Sharzoom* list of scholarship recipients, I feel great joy knowing so many students at Fresno State University are benefiting from Uncle Ed's life and generosity.

Yervant Levonian was my mother's brother. He was born in Aintab, Turkey to Hovhanness and Dudu Levonian, wealthy landowners and exporters of apricots and pistachios. He came to the United States prior to the Armenian Genocide in 1915 and settled in Fresno. His parents, a sister (my mother), and a brother struggled through the hardships of the deportation of the Genocide and finally arrived exhausted and destitute in Aleppo, Syria.

Yervant's brother Levon fondly known as "*Toh Levon*" opened a school in Aleppo for all the refugee children and was revered by all for his compassion and skill as a teacher, musician, and administrator. The funding for this school came from the sale of his mother's (my grandmother's) gorgeous gold jewelry which she was able somehow to conceal on her arduous journey across the Syrian Desert. (I prize having the only two matching bracelets remaining from her large collection.)

Yervant and his bride, Rose Gagosian, opened a small grocery store, Peacock Market, on Belmont St. They would eventually trade their way up to a third larger market located near Belmont and Blackstone. They worked long and hard for their living and lived in a modest house behind the store. Uncle worked and saved eventually buying some fruit orchards and after WWII a new home.

He lived a happy but frugal life that consisted of work, friends, relatives, and his lovely wife Rose.

He was like a surrogate father to me, being that my father died when I was an in-



Rose & Yervant Hovhanness Levonian.

fant. Going to Fresno from Los Angeles over the old winding 2 lane Grapevine was the biggest adventure for us especially during winter snow storms. I can still remember reaching in the jelly bean jar at the store for a special treat.

It was to this house behind the store that my mother, Zekie Levonian arrived after suffering life through the Genocide. An accomplished pianist and accustomed to the privileged life, she began working long hours in the hot Fresno packing houses and helping with cooking chores in the Levonian household which now held two more brothers and their families.

When uncle became ill a few years after the passing of Aunt Rose, he asked my husband, Dr. H. Jack Abdulian, and myself for advice as to the disbursement of his money.

Being that he was childless, we advised him to leave it all to the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). We knew his money would be handled properly and increased substantially due to their expertise in these areas. This he did and designated Fresno State as one of the recipients. The rest is history.

Many of Fresno State students are now benefiting from my Uncle Ed's generosity. It is our hope that the students will appreciate it and use their knowledge wisely. Perhaps in turn, they may help a student someday. This will be uncle's greatest legacy. **G**

** This article has appeared in Hye Sharzoom, the organ of Fresno State University Armenian Studies Program.*

AMAA Elects Board Members And Officers

The Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), at its meeting of December 14, 2002, re-elected Andrew Torigian of Paramus, NJ, as the President of the Association for the unprecedented sixth consecutive term.

Each year the AMAA mails out ballots to its members for the election of one-third of its Board of Directors. The membership, in turn, elects AMAA Board members to serve three-year terms. The newly-constituted Board then proceeds to appoint the officers of the AMAA for the coming year.

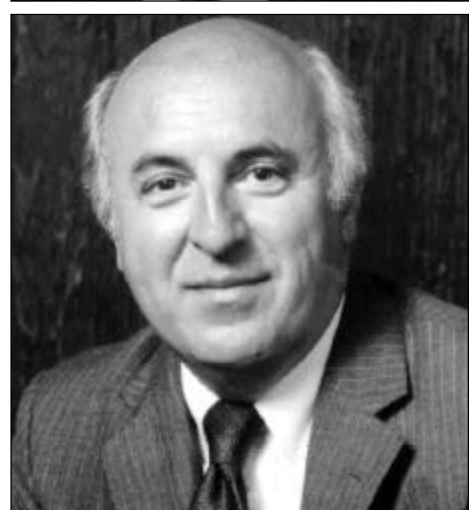
This year (2002) five incumbents were re-elected to the Board and four new members were added. Those elected were Mr. Harry Balukjian of Bethesda, MD; Dr. John Bezirgianian of Trumansburg, NY; John Cherkezian of Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Charles DeMirjian of Media, PA; Phyllis Dohanian of Belmont, MA; David Hagopian of Deerfield, IL; Gary Phillips, Esq. of Los Angeles, CA; Michele Simourian of Dover, MA and Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian of Royal Oak, MI. The new members are Harry Dulgarian; John Bezirgianian, MD; John Cherkezian; Gary Phillips, Esq. and Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian.

The new officers of the AMAA for the



Clockwise: Andrew Torigian, George Phillips, Esq. and Robert Hekemian, Sr.

coming year are: Andrew Torigian (President) of Paramus, NJ; Robert Hekemian, Sr. (Vice President) of Saddle River, NJ; George Phillips, Sr., Esq. (Vice President) of Los Angeles, CA; Aram Robert Minnetian (Treasurer) of Hoboken, NJ; David Hekemian (Assistant Treasurer) of Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ; Harry Dulgarian (Co-Recording Secretary) of Belmont, MA; Lawrence Kalfayan, Esq. (Co-Recording Secretary) of Glendale, CA; and Eileen Chopourian Stephey (Co-Recording Secretary) of Havertown, PA. **G**



Haigazian Students Value Friendship

Master's of Art and Master's of Business Administration students attended a cocktail reception Friday, February 7, 2003 at Haigazian University. The event gathered students of different classes, stages and majors together to open up channels of communication among them.

Some of those present are continuing their education for career goals, while others are in the program for personal development. "Both are appreciated and welcome," said Reverend Dr. Paul Haidostian, University President. Dr. Haidostian stressed that professionalism is more than specialization in a field. "We need to help each other and the whole society to move beyond getting a degree and a specialization to professional behavior and outlook," he said. Dr. Haidostian encouraged those present to keep in touch and to express honest and realistic opinion on the program, thus helping Haigazian serve the academic community better. Both faculty members and professors had a chance to associate with students and discuss with them personal academic and career plans in an informal manner. **G**



85th Anniversary Of The Armenian Congregational Church Of Detroit

On Thanksgiving Sunday, November 24, 2002, the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit highlighted the 85th anniversary of its founding, held in the Church Social Hall. An overflow crowd of 325 parishioners and friends from far and near had come to celebrate the church's anniversary and its attainment of 85 years of growth and spiritual service to a community representing more than a score of towns spread out over the greater Detroit area.

The Master of ceremonies of the banquet was Rodney Keteyian. The banquet opened by the singing of the American and Armenian national anthems, sung by April Arabian Tini and Gayaneh Kachadourian respectively, an invocation by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, followed by an anniversary toast. A very sumptuous traditional turkey dinner, with all its trimmings, was prepared by Moses and Maggie Avakian and their crew.

At the banquet, Rodney Keteyian and Mrs. Rosette Tootikian welcomed all the attendees and the special guests. Brief and apropos greetings were given by the Minister, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Richard E. Marburger.

The key-note speaker of the evening was the Rev. Jirair M. Sogomian, who congratulated the church, reminisced briefly about his ministry (1970-1975) at ACC, and gave a most timely, thought-provoking and challenging message on the privileges and re-



Clergy who attended the 85th anniversary celebrations.

sponsibilities of the Church at this juncture of history.

The musical program included Armenian selections by Gayaneh Kachadourian and English selections by April Arabian Tini, accompanied by Margaret Benian and Mat deRaad respectively..

Among the highlights of the banquet was a beautifully compiled 36-page booklet (a gift from Ralph and Frances Garabedian), which included letters of congratulations from President George W. Bush, Governor John Engler, Lt. Governor Dick Posthumus, Governor-Elect and Attorney General Jennifer M. Granholm, Southfield Mayor Brenda L. Lawrence, Executive Committee of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, U.S. Senators Carl Levin and Debbie

Stabenow, U.S. Congressman Joe Knollenberg, AMAA Executive Director, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, UAECNE Central Committee Chairman, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, and from more than forty churches and lay leaders and institutions from all over the world. The booklet also included a brief history of the church and pictures from yesteryears and the present time, as well as a long list of anniversary donors.

Also, on this milestone occasion, as an anniversary memento, a pen, with the inscription "85th Anniversary of the Armenian Congregational Church, 1917-2002," was given to each attendee.

The program concluded with the singing of the Hayr Mér and benediction given by all six attending clergy. **G**

Building Excellence In Higher Education

Appraising Haigazian's role in academic and professional education, Haigazian University President, the Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian hosted a colloquium retreat on Monday, January 20, 2003 headed by Lebanon's Minister of Education and Higher Learning, Mr. Abdel Rahim Mrad, to present Haigazian's strategy and contribution to higher learning in Lebanon. Present were Haigazian University Deans, Chairs of departments and a number of the Administration.

After a word of welcome by the President, each of the Deans presented a synopsis of their faculty achievements and accomplish-

ments at Haigazian.

Following was the President's presentation that highlighted the challenges that youth and societies face and how the Armenian Evangelical educational philosophy responds to it.

In his speech, the Minister highly valued Haigazian's focus on quality education; the theoretical and practical methods used here and the challenges of the future.

In return, the Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian ac-



The Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian and Minister Abdel Rahim Mrad: a token of appreciation.

knowledgeed Minister Mrad and presented to him the Haigazian University shield, as a token of appreciation. **G**

A Spring Recital To Benefit Summer Camps In Armenia And Karabagh

The AMAA's Armenia Summer Camp and Christmas Committee will present a Spring Recital on May 4, at 3:00 PM at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, featuring renowned pianist Vardan Mamikonian of Paris (Originally from Armenia). Donation: \$20 per person (\$10 for students).

Your generous donations will enable us to provide for over 10,000 deprived children in Armenia, Georgia and Karabagh to participate at AMAA summer camps and Daily Vacation Bible Schools, where they will enjoy fresh air and nutritious meals in a Christian environment with Bible stories, music, drama and outdoor games under caring supervision.

Forty dollars covers a child's stay at our overnight camps for a week and twenty-five dollars covers a child's stay at a day camp for a week.

Throughout the year, The Armenia Summer Camp and Christmas Committee is faced with the challenge of

fundraising for the children's summer camps and for Christmas Joy Packages.

We thank you for your consistent support and hope you will join us on this occasion.

If you are unable to attend and would like to support our efforts, please fill out the form and mail it to the AMAA. Your donation will have a positive impact on young lives. G

G I will attend and support the Spring Recital with my donation of -----U.S. Dollars

G I am unable to attend but would like to support the summer camps with my donation of ----- U.S. Dollars

G I would like to sponsor ----- children @ \$40 each for overnight camp
----- children @ \$25 each for day camp

Enclosed please find my donation in the amount of -----U.S. Dollars

Name -----

Address -----

(Make tax deductible donations to AMAA earmarked for Summer Camps and mail to 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652)

Armenian Evangelical College Celebrates 80th Anniversary

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary, the Armenian Evangelical College (Yeprem and Martha Philibossian School), Beirut, organized on December 7, 2002 a concert at the Assembly Hall of the American University of Beirut under the high patronage of the First Lady, Mrs. Andrée Emile Lahoud. The main star of the evening was former student Mezzo Soprano Lena Kurkjian (Class of 1979 and currently with Bern Opera) who enchanted the audience with arias from Schubert, Brahms, Alemshah, Gomidas, Ganachian and spiritual hymns. She was accompanied by young virtuoso pianist Eva Aroutunian (from Geneva) and the Armiss Choir under the supervision of Rev. Nerces Balabanian. One of the Hymns (Out of the Depths) was especially dedicated to the 1988 earthquake victims of Armenia.

At the end of the concert, Mr. Zaven Messerlian, principal of the school, thanked the artists for their generous contribution of



this concert to the school and all the sponsors who funded the event. Finally, Dr. Arda Ekmekji, President of the Board, offered Mrs.

Lahoud and the artists commemorative plaques bearing the logo of the Armenian Evangelical College's 80th anniversary. G

A Viola Recital - A New CD Released by AMAA's Armenia Summer Camp/Christmas Committee

by Ani Chalemian

The Armenia Summer Camp and Christmas Committee of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is proud to present a CD recording of "A Viola Recital" featuring Gor Hovhannisyan, the gifted violist from Armenia, and the internationally acclaimed pianist, Gary Fitzpatrick. The recital was recorded live on May 5, 2002, and is now available to the public for \$15.00 per copy. The proceeds from the sale of these CDs will be used for AMAA's Summer Camp projects in Armenia.

The recording features a beautiful variety of pieces ranging from an early Romantic sonata of Schubert through the later Romantic sonata of Brahms to the 20th Century pieces of Max Reger and Darius Milhaud. In addition, the recording boasts of four Armenian pieces by Bagdasarian and Gomidas, arranged for viola and piano, and played with passion, pathos and elegance.

They are Nocturne by Bagdasarian, and three pieces by Gomidas- Dzirani Dzar, Keler Tsoler, and Groung.

The Sonata in E-flat major finds Brahms in a relaxed mood, with the first movement giving the soloist a beautiful singing tune. The second movement has passion and drama, and the third movement gives way to a gorgeous melody. Originally conceived for the clarinet and piano, and arranged for the violin and piano by the composer, the viola version has become one of the crown jewels in the violist's repertoire.

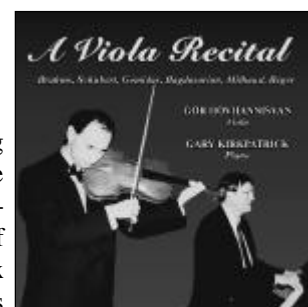
The Quatre Visages of Darius Milhaud, written in 1943, are representations in music of four different kinds of girls, from California, Wisconsin, Brussels, and Paris. These are a delightful group of movements written by a prolific composer who was a member of the diverse group of French composers known as Les Six.

According to the Grove Concise Dictionary of Music Max "Reger is

considered by many to be the most important composer to elaborate on the stylistic traits of Johannes Brahms and move German music into the twentieth century." His style in the Suite in D Major for Viola Solo is dense with counterpoint, with fast modulations which lead to an atonal feeling, although his music remains strictly tonal in its harmonic direction. He was a firm supporter of 'absolute' music and saw himself in a tradition going back to Bach, through Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms. The four movements are written without piano accompaniment and are beautifully played by Mr. Hovhannisyan.

The Schubert Sonata for Viola and Piano in A Minor "Arpeggione", was written for a newly devised and soon obsolete stringed instrument, the Arpeggione. It now provides additional repertoire for the cello or viola. The partnership between violist and pianist are excellent. There is just the right give and take and a beautiful lyricism expressed in this delightful sonata.

It is with great joy and pride that we are offering this beautiful recording. Please use the attached coupon for orders. G



Please forward ----- CD's @ US \$15.00 each for a total of US \$-----

Name -----

Address -----

(Make checks payable to AMAA in U.S. Dollars)

This Just In ...

With sadness of heart, yet thankfulness for a lifetime of ministry to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have heard of the passing away of the Rev. Yura Avanesian, on Wednesday, February 19, 2003. Rev. Avanesian was the pastor of The Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Yerevan, President of the Union of Evangelical Churches in Armenia, and member of a number of important organizations and committees. Rev. Avanesian had recently experienced a serious accidental fall resulting in several bodily injuries, which, though treated immediately, ultimately resulted in his death. His funeral services took place on Friday, February 21, followed by a committal service on Saturday, February 22, 2003.

On behalf of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, we express our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Nadia Avanesian and her children, as well as to the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church Family in Armenia. A more detailed eulogy of Rev. Avanesian will appear in the next issue of the AMAA News.

Armenian Children's Milk Fund Presents An Evening Of Family Fun

On Saturday, February 15, the Armenian Children's Milk Fund and "2Mayrer" presented a fun-filled event for the whole family at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington, Massachusetts. 2Mayrer's Nvair Beylerian and Diane Haroutounian performed favorite children's songs in Armenian to an enthusiastic crowd of more than 300 people. Young members of the audience were encouraged to participate by dancing, singing and marching along. They were joined by 2Mayrer's silly friend, Eshleeg-Meshleeg the donkey. 2Mayrer, who released their first CD in 2002, describe their music as "songs from yesterday, which we sing today, while preparing our children for tomorrow".

Following the concert, attendees were treated to a variety of activities, including a clown, face-painting, "Big Al" and his crazy balloon creations, and delicious treats provided by Barnstormer's Restaurant, Gail Selian, and Gary's Gourmet Chocolates. Adding to the magic of the evening was a special performance by noted musicians Ken Kalajian, Leon Janigian, and Peter, Matthew and Nick Kyvelos, who kept attendees' toes tapping and happily provided hands-on dem-



onstrations of their instruments to the children.

Proceeds from this event benefit the Armenian Children's Milk Fund, which has been providing infant formula to needy chil-

dren in Armenia for more than thirteen years.

Through the fundraising efforts of its volunteers, the Milk Fund has helped thousands of Armenian children get a healthy start in life. **G**

AMAA JAMES G. JAMESON ESSAY CONTEST OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has announced it will once again sponsor the James G. Jameson Essay Contest. Topics should touch upon some aspect of Armenian heritage such as religion, literature, language, history, culture, geography, economy or history. Awards will be made in two categories: High School contestants and College/University contestants. The deadline for entries is June 15, 2003.

All Armenian or part-Armenian students are eligible. Only unpublished entries will be accepted. The winner in each category will be awarded \$250.00, provided from the income of a special fund established by Mr. & Mrs. James G. Jameson of Brookline, MA.

The essays should be written in English and have a length of 1,000 to 2,000 words. A contestant is allowed no more than one entry per year, and no more than one member of a family may receive an award in a five-year period. If no submitted essay is considered sufficiently meritorious, no award will be granted that year.

Entries and/or inquiries should be directed to:

AMAA - James G. Jameson Essay Contest
31 West Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652

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Վեր. Պարգև Ն. Տարագնեան

Թերևս շատեր պիտի մախրնորեն որ թաղուած մնար Յիսուս որպէսզի գայթակղութեան, վիճաբանութեան, եւ բաժանումի գոնէ մէկ կէտ կամ պատրուակ պակաս ըլլար աստուածաբաններու, եկեղեցիներու եւ այսպէս կոչուած հաւատացեալներու միջեւ: Ո՛չ-հաւատացեալ մարդերու համար կարծես չէր բաւեր Յիսուսը՝ աւանդութեան նամբով՝ «Աստուծոյ Որդի», «Մեսիա», կամ՝ «Աստուածայայտնութիւն» ընդունիլը եւ հոչակելը, ու տակաւին՝ հաւատալի կամ անհաւատալի հրաշքներ վերագրելը իրեն, ու ահա պէտք էր նաեւ ընդունելին «մեռած», «թաղուած», ու «երեւ օր ետք յարութիւն առած» ըլլալու «առասպել»ը: Յատկանշական է, սակայն, որ Քրիստոսի յարութիւնն էր որ վնասական դեր ունեցաւ Յիսուսի աշակերտներուն համար՝ վկայելու Յիսուսի Տէր եւ Փրկիչ, ինչպէս նաեւ Աստուծոյ Որդի եւ Աստուած ըլլալը: Քրիստոսի յարութիւնն էր որ բնորոշեց Յիսուսի աստուածային ծագում ունենալը, ինչ որ հետեւեալներէն էր Սուրբ Հոգիին ներգործութեան՝ որ հիմնովին յեղաշրջեց աշակերտներուն հաւատքը՝ Նազովրեցի Յիսուսին մկատմամբ: Յիսուսի կրած չարչարանքը խաչին վրայ, անոր մահը եւ յարութիւնը ոմանց համար կը թուին ըլլալ վերջին արարը Նազովրեցիին կեանքին, սակայն, Անոր աշակերտներուն, ինչպէս նաեւ մեզի համար՝ Քրիստոնէական հաւատքի մախրեցանքը կը կազմեն այդ դէպքերը: Շատ նշանակալից է Պօղոս Առաքեալի վկայութիւնը այս մասին, «Եթէ Քրիստոս յարութիւն առած չէ, ուրեմն մեր ֆարգութիւնը (աւետարանը) պարապ է ու ձեր հաւատքն ալ պարապ է» (Ա. Կորնթ. 15. 14):

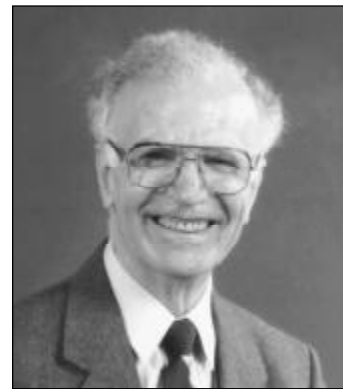
Ինձի այնպէս կը թուի՝ թէ մենք թաքուն ընդդիմութիւն մը ունինք յարուցեալ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի նկատմամբ: Յարութեան տօնին առիթով կ'ողջունենք զիրար «Քրիստոս յարեալ ի մեռելոց» յանկերգը կրկնելով տարուէ-տարի: Եկեղեցիի բնմերէն ալ կը լսուին պերճախօս ֆարգներ որոնք երբեմն Պղատոնական հոգիի անմահութիւնով, եւ կամ հոգեկան, բարոյական ու ազգային արժէքներու յաւերժացումով կ'նգրափակուին: Արդարեւ, Յիսուսի երկրային կեանքը, կատարած հրաշքներն ու նշանները, անոր սփանչելի ուսուցումները, նոյնիսկ ողբերգական մահը կ'ընդունինք մերթ հիացումով, ու մերթ ափսոսանքով: Սակայն, այդ բոլորը գոյութենական հարց չեն դառնար, ու վնաս չեն հասցներ մեզի. ո՛չ ալ կը խանգարեն մեր հանգիստը: Միւս կողմէն, նշմարապէս յարուցեալ Քրիստոս մը ունենալը իրապէս խռով կը պատճառէ մեզի մեր ամենօրեայ կեանքին, մտքին, սրտին, եւ գրադումներուն մէջ, ու յստակ դիրքորոշում կը պահանջէ մեզմէ: Մոռնալով, կամ անտեսելով Յիսուսի փառաւոր յարութեան մատուցած շնորհքը, ու յաւիտենական

կեանքի յոյսը, մենք անհանգիստ կը զգանք Յարուցեալ մեր շուրջը ունենալու հաւանականութիւնով, ու ասիկա՝ Վիքթոր Հիկոյի ժամ Վալթանին (Վադեմի դատապարտեալ մը) նման՝ որ ոստիկանապետ ժամերին աչքերը տեսապէս սեւեռուած կը զգար իր վրայ՝ ու ժամ Վալթան չհանգստացաւ մինչեւ որ ժամեր անձնասպան ըլլալով մեռաւ:

Կը պատմուի թէ մեռած մարդ մը յանկարծ կը վերակենդանանայ, ու կը սկսի հարուածել դագաղին կափարիչը: Դագաղը կը բացուի ու մարդը պիշ պիշ կը նայի դագաղը կրողներուն. «Ես չեմ մեռած», կը բղաւէ մարդը: Անոր բառերը կ'ընդունուին լուռ տարակուսանքով: Վերջապէս, դագաղին հետեւող սգակիրներէն մէկը կը պատասխանէ, «Բարեկամ, բժիշկները եւ պատուիւն հաստատեցին քու մեռած ըլլալդ, ուրեմն, դուն մեռած ես մեզի համար»: Ու կը կատարուի մարդուն թաղման պարտ ու պատշաճ արարողութիւնը: Հաւանաբար սգակիրները թաղեցին մարդը, որպէսզի իրենց կեանքը աւելի հեշտ ընթանար, ու գիշերով աւելի հանգիստ քնանային...:

Կասկած չկայ որ շատ մարդեր այսօր ալ անհանգիստ կը զգան իրենք զիրենք՝ Յիսուսի յարութիւն առած ըլլալու իրողութիւնով: Այսպիսիներ թերեւս կը վախճան իրենց ունեցած կրօնական կամ եկեղեցական հեղինակութեան վրայ որ բնականաբար պիտի մտնանայ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի ներկայութեան մէջ: Ոմանք կը մտահոգուին իրենց ունեցած մտաւորականի, կամ աստուածաբանի համբաւով զոր կրնան կորսնցնել եթէ վկայեն Քրիստոսի մարմնաւոր յարութիւնը: Ուրիշներ հաւատքի անկարելի եւ անընդունելի մարտահրաւերի մը դիմացը կը գտնեն իրենք զիրենք ու տեղի կուտան ներքին ու արտաքին ճնշումներուն: Ու տակաւին, շատեր ձերբազատուած կը զգան իրենք զիրենք Յիսուսի փոխանցած աւետարանչական ու ընկերային օգնութեան առաքելութիւնէն, այսինքն, «աշակերտելու աշխարհը, եւ մկրտելու զանոնք», ու մանաւանդ՝ «աղատներուն աւետարանը ֆարգելու, կոտրած սիրտ ունեցողները բժշկելու, գերիներուն ազատութիւն տալու, կոյրներուն՝ տեսութիւն, եւ հարստահարեալներուն ազատութիւն» հոչակելու: Անոնց համար աւելի նպատակայարմար կը դառնայ մեռած Յիսուս մը քան՝ յարուցեալ ու կենդանի Քրիստոս մը:

Ֆէոտոր Տոսթոյեւսի՝ իր գլուխ-գործոց «Քարամագով եղբայրները» վէպին մէջ սփանչելի կերպով կը



պատկերացնե՛ մարդկային քա՛հուն կամ ակնյայտ տենչը՝ Յիսուսը յաւէտ մեռած համարելու, ու այս պարագային՝ Քրիստոնեայ Եկեղեցիին ու անոր մէկ իշխանաւորին կողմէ: Աշխարահռչակ այս վէպին «Մեծ Հաւատաւննիչը» հատուածին մէջ՝ Տոսթոյեւսֆի կը ներկայացնե՛ Քարամազով եղբայրներուն երիցագոյնը, Իվանը, որ իր մէկ բանաստեղծութեան մէջ դէմ առ դէմ կը բերէ Յարուցեալ Յիսուսը՝ Միջին Դարերէն վերցուած Կարտինալի մը հետ որ Սպանիոյ Սեվիլլ ֆաղափին տխրահռչակ Մեծ Հաւատաւննիչն էր: Անոր մէկ խօսքին վրայ հարիւրաւոր «հերետիկոս»ներ կը հրկիզուէին ցիցերու վրայ: Իվան կը ջատագովէ Կարտինալին թեգիսը՝ թէ Յիսուս սխալ ըրած էր մերժելով Սատանային ներկայացուցած երեւ առաջարկները երբ մեր Տէրը «անապատ»ը առանձնացած՝ կը մտածէր Աստուծոյ փրկութեան ծրագիրին ու զայն գործադրելու եղանակին շուրջ: Սատանան կ'առաջարկէր որ Յիսուս դիմէր ռազմավարական երեւ միջոցներու՝ եթէ կ'ուզէր աշխարհը իրապէս փրկել, այսինքն՝ հաց տալ ժողովուրդին, հրաշքներ կատարել, եւ ենթարկուիլ Սատանային իշխանութեան: Մեծ Հաւատաւննիչը՝ իմանալով որ Յիսուս վերադարձած էր աշխարհ ու կը շրջէր ֆաղափին մէջ, եւ բժշկութիւն ու բարիք կը սփռէր ժողովուրդին խոնարհ դասակարգին մէջ՝ ձերբակալել կուտայ զայն, ու ապա կը բանտարկէ: Հաւատաւննիչը գիշերով կ'այցելէ Յիսուսը բանտին մէջ եւ խստօրէն կը կշտամբէ զայն՝ ըսելով, «Ինչո՞ւ եկար կրկին...իրաւունք չունիս գալու, ու մեր գործը խանգարելու...պիտի դատապարտեմ քեզ իբրեւ

հերետիկոս ու վաղը ցիցի վրայ այրել պիտի տամ քեզ: Անոնք որոնք քեզ ռաբբի համարեցին այսօր, իմ մէկ խօսքիս վրայ ածուխ պիտի դիզեն ցիցին ներքեւ...»: Մեծ Հաւատաւննիչը, սակայն, կը փոխէ միտքը, ու բանտին դուռը կը բանայ. «Գնա՛, ու անգամս ալ մի գար...» կը հրամայէ: Յիսուս, որ մինչեւ այդ լուռ մտիկ կ'ընէր, կը մօտենայ Հաւատաւննիչին, ու կը համբուրէ զայն...»:

Մենք իրապէս պատրա՞ստ ենք ընդունելու Տէր Յիսուսին յարութիւն առած ըլլալու իրողութիւնը: Արդեօք աւանդական ու բարեպաշտական տօ՞ն մըն է որ կը կատարենք: Թերեւս կ'ուզենք շրջանցել Յիսուսի յարութեան դէպքը՝ տարբեր մեկնաբանութիւններ ընելով՝ որպէսզի Յարուցեալ Տէրը մեզ անհամգիստ չընէ, ու չֆանդէ մեր անձնական ծրագիրները: Սակայն, մենք կը մոռնանք - կամ՝ մոռնալ կ'ուզենք - թէ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս Յիսուսը «շնորհի վրայ շնորհի» կը բերէ մեզի, ու կ'ողջունէ մեզ «Խաղաղութիւն ձեզի» ըսելով, որպէսզի խաղաղեցնէ տարակուսանքով փոքրկող մեր հոգիները: Սեղան կը բանայ մեր առջեւը՝ ինչպէս ըրաւ իր աշակերտներուն՝ յարութիւն առնելէ ետք, որպէսզի մեզ կերակրէ: Ու տակաւին, վստահութիւն կը ներշնչէ մեզի՝ թէ տակաւին կը սիրէ մեզ՝ հակառակ մեր թերահաւատութեան եւ ուրացումին: Սակայն ամենէն զարմանալին այն է որ մեզի պէս «անպիտան» ծառաներուն - Պետրոսին օրինակով - կը վստահի ամենէն պիտանի ու մեծ առաքելութիւն մը. «Արածէ՛ իմ գառնուկներս...Արածէ՛ իմ ոչխարներս:» «Ահա ամէն օր ես ձեզի հետ եմ՝ մինչեւ աշխարհիս վերջը:»G

Չեռնադրութիւն Իսթանպուլի Մէջ

D;kt;mb;r É4 ÊÊÊÊ4 Kiraki khs7rh ;tq4 Khtik'a,ali (Isj anpoul) Fa\ Au;taranakan :k;[;ziin mh= M;r]aur Ar;u;lqi Fa\ Au;taranakan :k;[;zin;rou Miouj ;an ;u Khtik'a,ali Fa\ Au;taranakan :k;[;zii miat;[na. a];5-nouj ;amb katarou;zau];5nadrouj ;an pa,tamounq me masnakzouj ;amb artasafmanhn vama-naza6 au;taranakan fowiun;rou ;u patgama-uorn;rou!

Isj anpouli bnacicn;rh Grigor A[apal7[lou4 or ardhn \a\tni dhmq men h Isj anpouli enk;ralin ;u fa\ vo[owourdi farz;rou masin ir ou;za6 ;loj n;row ;u f;5at;sili farzaxrolzn;row4];5-nadrouj ;zau ;u pa,t7naphs sksau orphs fowiu 6a5a-l;l Khtik'a,ali Fa\ Au;taranakan :k;[;ziin!

Au;li qan ÊÊÊ fogin;rou n;rka\ouj ;amb tpa-uoric pa,tamounq men hr4 orou enj azqin miasnakan a[7j qn;row a,. arfi xanaxan ko[m;rh vamanaza6 fog;uorakann;r4 ir;nz];5qe dn;low Grigor A[apal7[loui gl.oun wra\4 katar;zín anor];5nadrouj iune! Enj ;rzoumn;row4 ;rg;row ;u

qaroxn;row pa,tamounqin masnak-z;zan W;r1 N,an Paggal;an4 W;r1 :oush` Yappour ;u Tiar Frand Kiuxhl-;an! M;r]aur Ar;-u;lqi Fa\ Au;taranakan :k;[;zin;rou Miouj ;an oro,oume kardazou;zau W;r1 Mkrtic Garakh7x-;ani ko[mh!];5nadrouj ;nhn ;tq ;[an fa\;rh n a[7j qn;r! W;r1 Alhn MhqQh\ n . ra-takann;r touau noren6a\ w;rapatou;liin! Pa,tamounqe ,arounakou;zau ;rg;zo[ouj iunn;row ;u W;r1 S;rob Mkrtic;ani . 7sq;row!

};5nadrouj ;an pa,tamounqe auart;zau W;r1 Grigor A[apal7[loui gofabanakan a[7j qow!G (qa[oua6 Isj anpouli Marmara &raj ;rj hn)



Փետրուարեան Մտորում

Վեր. Յովհաննէս Ն. Գարեհա

Աւարայր . . . : Ճակատամարտ, հաւատարմութիւն, հաւատք, ուրացում, անմահութիւն, մատնութիւն, Հայ Եկեղեցի, դաւ, Յիսուս Քրիստոս, ջարդ, տօն, պաշտամունք, չմեղանք, մահատակութիւն . . . :

Այս բոլորը, հոգ չէ՝ հակասան եւ անկապ, կը յուզէ հայու հոգին ամէն Փետրուարին, երբ հանգամանօրէն կը յիշուի Աւարայրի բախտորոշ ճակատամարտը:

«Սրբոց Վարդանանց Զօրավարաց» կոչուած եկեղեցական տօնը կը պարզէ հաւատքի եւ սկզբունքի մարդը, մաւն անսկզբունք, յեղեղուն պատեհապաշտը: Ան՝ որ կարող է դիրք պահել իր հաւատքին ու սկզբունքներուն պաշտպանութեան համար, եւ բարոյական սնանկը՝ որ, դէմք կը փոխէ հոսանքի ու ժգնութեան համաչափ, կը հակադրուի: Եւ հարցը կը զգենու բարոյական ու կրօնական հանգամանք, հաւատքի հարց:

Յատկանշական է Վարդանանց Սգատօնին անունը. «Տօն Սրբոց Վարդանանց Զօրավարաց» յոգնակի: Վարդանանքու տօնն է մեր ազգային կրօնական տօնը: Տօնը գոհուած եւ վերապրող մարտիկներու: Սուրբերո՛ւ . . . : Եղիշէ պատմիչին համաձայն, «Վարդանանքը» գոհ տուն 1036 «սուրբե՛ր»: Հետագայ տարիներուն, մինչեւ Նուարսակի դաշնագիրը գոհերու թի՞ւր . . . : Բիւրաւոր սուրբեր:

«Սրբոց Վարդանանց Զօրավարաց. . .»: Ուրեմն միայն Վարդանով չէ, որ կը պարծենանք: Հապա Վարդաններով, բոլոր գինակիրներով ու անգէններով, անոնցմով՝ որոնք մարտնչելով պահեցին հաւատքը: Կը պարծենանք մաւն անգէն մարտիկներու շարքերով, որոնք՝ միանալով հոգեւոր հովիւ Ղեւոնդ Երեց Վանանդեցիին՝ իջան Աւարայր եւ, Աւետարանին պատգամով ու հաղորդութեան խորհուրդի մատակարարութեամբ, պայքարեցան

չարին ու մեղքին դէմ:

Մեսրոպ Մաշտոցի եւ Սահակ Պարթեւի աշակերտած, Ղեւոնդ Երեց կը թողու ազգային-եկեղեցական պատմութեան մէջ պայծառ հետք մը: Մասնակցած՝ եկեղեցական խորհրդաժողովներու, որոնց մէջ՝ 444 թուի Շահապիւանի կարեւոր խորհրդաժողովը, Ղեւոնդ Երեց եղած է հմուտ ազգային հարցերու, եւ անոնց առնչութիւնը հայ ժողովուրդին ազգային-կրօնական կեանքի առողջութեան հետ: Ան համոզուած էր, որ բրիստոնէական հաւատքին պահպանումը անհրաժեշտ էր հայ ազգային նկարագրին առանձնայատկութեան պահպանումին համար, ամէն գոհողութեան գինով: Աւարայրի յաջորդող տարիներուն, Պարսկաստանի «նուանդական քաղաքականութեան» գոհ գացած է Ղեւոնդ Երեց, սպաննուած՝ Խորասան աշխարհին մէջ, Նուարսակի դաշնագրէն տասնեակ մը տարիներ առաջ . . . :

«Վարդանանց Զօրավարաց» յոգնակի է: Չարին դէմ պայքարող բոլոր մարտիկները՝ բոլոր դարերու մէջ՝ մասնակից են Աւարայրի ճակատամարտին:

Փետրուար ամիսը անբարբառ հառաչանքներով հայ ժողովուրդին կը յիշեցնէ ճակատամարտը, որ ուժգնօրէն կը մղուի տարբեր երկիրներու «Աւարայրներուն» մէջ ամէն տարի . . . : Արդեօք պիտի հասնի՞նք «Նուարսակներու»: Ո՞ւր են մեր Վարդանները:

Ղեւոնդ Երեց, Վարդաններու կողմին, կը խօսի . . . : Երանի՛ լսողին:G



The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA News.

* **Aynilian, Genia**
Beirut, Lebanon
* **Chatalbash, Tom**
Saddle Brook, NJ
* **Ekmekji, Noubar**
Los Angeles, CA
* **Elias, Astrig**
Watertown, MA
* **Ghazarian, Jirair**
Montreal, Canada
* **Gostanian, Ruth**
Warwick, RI

* **Hasserjian, Margaret**
Manchester, NH
* **Hovnanian, Wilhelmina**
Thousand Oaks, CA
* **Jerejian, Arsen**
Paramus, NJ
* **Nercessian, Avedis**
N. Hollywood, CA
* **Ohanesian, Henriette**
* **Ounanian, Zabel**
* **Paraghamian, Helen**
Belmont, MA

* **Saxenian, John**
Dumont, NJ
* **Soukiasian, Vahan**
Tenafly, NJ
* **Tumberian, Alexan**
Anjar, Lebanon
* **Vardanian, Samuel**
Yerevan, Armenia
* **Yeranian, Araxie**
Sarasota, FL

* Memorials were designated for AMAA.

Լիտիա Պաղտասարեան

Լիտիա Պաղտասարեան ծնած է Հալէպ, 1925-ին, Յակոբ եւ Ֆլորա Թոփնեաններու երդիկին տակ: Նախակրթութիւնը ստացած է Հալէպի Ուսումնասիրաց վարժարանին մէջ: Սակայն կեանքի դժուար պայմաններու ընթացքով, փոքր տարիքէն ստիպուած է ուսումը կիսատ թողոյլ եւ Այնթափի ձեռագործ հիւսելով եւ ծախելով ընտանիքին օգտակար դառնալ:



1946-ին ամուսնացած է Խաչատուր Պաղտասարեանի հետ եւ ընտանիքը բախտաւորուած է հինգ զաւակներով՝ երկու մանչ եւ երեք աղջիկ: 1985-ին տեղափոխուած են Սիւնի, Աւստրալիա, միանալու իրենց հարազատներուն:

Լիտիա եղած է իսկական Հայ Քրիստոնեայ անձ մը եւ նուիրուած ու գործուած մայր մը: Ունեցած է սիրով եւ օրհնութիւնով լեցուն հոգի, աղօթքով լեցուն միտք, եւ իր սէրը, ժպիտը եւ ծառայութիւնը բաշխած է բոլորին անխոր: Ան բախտաւոր եղած է միշտ վայելելով իր զաւակներուն ու տանը մէկ թոռներուն սէրն ու յարգանքը: Մինչեւ վերջին օրերը իր կեանքին ան միշտ փառք տուած է Աստուծոյ՝ իր վայելած ամէնօրեայ օրհնութիւններուն եւ պարգևներուն Համար:

Վերջին ֆանի մը ամիսներուն, ան ենթարկուեցաւ առողջական ծանր վիճակներու, սակայն աղօթքով, հաւատքով եւ համբերութեամբ յաղթահարեց անոնց, անկարելի դարձնելով կարելի: Վերագտնելով իր առողջութիւնը եւ ուժը ան դարձաւ ոտքի կանգնեցաւ ու կրկին անգամ վկայեց Աստուծոյ մեծութիւնը եւ փառքը:

Սակայն, Օգոստոս 10, 2002-ին, գլխի ծանր կաթուածով, Լիտիա իր աչքերը փակեց այս աշխարհէն: Իր յիշատակը որպէս օրինակելի եւ հաւատացեալ Քրիստոնեայ միշտ վառ պիտի մնայ իր հարազատներուն եւ սիրելիներուն մէջ:

«Երանելի են այն մեռելները, որոնք տէրոջմով կը ննջեն» (Յայտն. Յովհ. 14. 13): Այս է Լիտիա Պաղտասարեանի կեանքի վկայութիւնը:G

Florence Sarkissian

Florence Sarkissian passed away December 3, 2002.

Florence was born in Lowell, MA., December 13, 1910, the daughter of Charles and Esther Harpootlian. She excelled in school and even skipped a grade. She had a career with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



After WWII Florence left Massachusetts to marry the love of her life, Leon Sarkisian, and moved to Detroit to start a family. She loved life and was happiest in her roles as a wonderful wife and helpmate and as a devoted mother and grandmother.

Florence is survived by daughters, Leanne Sarkisian and Zarie (William) Jones; grandchildren, Brittany Sarkisian, Jennifer and Kevin Jones, sister, Beatrice Harpootlian. She leaves this life to join her beloved husband, parents, sister, Queenie and brother, Burgess.

Memorial Services were held Monday, December 9th, at the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church, 602 N.E. 96th Street, Miami Shores.

In lieu of flowers, donations were sent to Harpootlian Family Fund, Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, N.J. G

Artemis Mirak

Artemis Mirak of Arlington, MA, passed away on January 19, 2003. She was the beloved wife of the late John Peter Mirak. She was the devoted mother of Robert Mirak, Charles Mirak, Edward Mirak and his wife Susan, and Muriel Weissbach and her husband Michael. She had 5 grandchildren, 4 great granddaughters, and several nieces & nephews. Funeral Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, on Wednesday, January 22 at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers memorial gifts may be made to The Orphans Fund of the Armenian Missionary Association of America,

31 West Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652; or The Armenian Children's Milk Fund, POBOX 652, Belmont MA 02478.

Interment was at Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA.G

Samuel Der-Ghazarian

Samuel Der-Ghazarian was born on January 24, 1925 in Hayneh, Turkey, son of Rev. Ghazar Der-Ghazarian and Mariam Sassounian. He comes from 23 generations of Armenian priests (*vartabeds and der-Hays*), and 2 generations of *Badvelis*.

He moved to Aleppo, Syria with his family where he got his education. Then he moved to Kamishli, Syria, where he became a teacher in an Armenian School. He was self-educated by reading many Armenian books throughout his life. He was very intelligent, especially in Armenian grammar and Armenian History.

He was a proud Armenian. He loved Armenians very much and helped a lot of his friends and strangers who didn't know how to write Armenian, writing Armenian letters to their loved ones in Armenia.

He spoke 6 languages: Armenian, Arabic, English, French, Turkish and Kurdish. He was very much loved by the Armenian community in Aleppo and in Kamishli. He helped many visiting pastors and preachers in Kamishli to visit Armenian communities and families.

He learned from his father, Rev. Der-Ghazarian, good Christian faith and to give a helping hand to others. He was a very loving, caring and humorous man.

Since his childhood, he had a dream to come to the United States to join his 4 sisters who moved to the States when he was 5 years old and in 1986 his dream was realized.

In 1993 he became disabled by falling in his driveway. Ever since his accident, he was never able to heal because of his diabetes. He was relocated to a nursing home in 1994 because he needed intensive care.

Samuel died on November 28, 2002, on Thanksgiving Day. He is survived by his wife, Jeannette, his two daughters, Ani and Houri (Hosdaghian), son in law, Mehair Hosdaghian and his two granddaughters, Rita and Talene Hosdaghian.G

The Armenian Children's Milk Fund Continues to Make a Difference in the Lives of Armenia's Most Vulnerable Citizens

The Armenian Children's Milk Fund (ACMF) is an all volunteer organization which was formed by a diverse group of caring individuals shortly after the tragic earthquake in Armenia in December 1988. ACMF's mission is to assist those children in Armenia who would otherwise not receive adequate nutrition. ACMF accomplishes its mission through a sustaining nutritional program. ACMF provides soy-based Isomil infant formula to needy children during their first year of life. ACMF focuses on children whose mothers are ill, absent, or for some reason physically unable to breastfeed, and whose families are too poor to purchase formula. During its 13 year history, ACMF has helped to give thousands of Armenian children a healthy start in life. Your support will enable us to continue this important work. Please use the form below to send your donation to this worthy cause. Thank you for making a difference.**G**



D -----
Yes, I would like to support and enable the ACMF to to make a difference in the lives of Armenia's most vulnerable citizens. Enclosed is my donation of \$ -----.

Name -----

Address -----

(please make your tax-deductible checks payable to AMAA, earmarked for ACMF, and mail to 31 W. Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652)

Armenian Missionary Association of America
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Paramus, NJ 07652

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